



The shutters are down on the Muswell Hill branch of Woolies. Photo by John Lawrence.

Thoughts on the demise of Woolworths

By Daphne Chamberlain

As a child in the West End, my mother used to go with her own mother to the first London Woolworths in Edgware Road. "Everyone used to call it the 3d and 6d shop," she says. "They didn't have anything that cost more than 6d, so it was well within my mum's purse. We used to walk over from Goodge Street every week."

Last month I joined a sad little crowd buying Woolies' souvenirs at Muswell Hill. "You could still get good bargains in here," said the woman beside me in the queue. "But if you wanted something that was difficult to carry, it was easier to go somewhere you could park," said someone else.

Sippy Azizollah writes: Having worked at the Southgate branch of Woolworths in the 1970s, I am saddened by the closure. When I worked there it was a really busy shop. I remember trying to sneak the odd toffee from the Pick and Mix.

There was a great team spirit there, and very often the manager would come down and work on the checkout if we were short of staff. I bought a great deal of kitchenware and remember trying to find ways of wriggling out of the yearly stock-taking weekend.

I went to the Muswell Hill branch last week, and it felt really hollow. There were two assistants packing up the display units, and when asked how they felt, one was near to tears, and the other said: "Muswell Hill won't feel the same any more."



Sippy collecting in Budgens. Photo by Diana Cormack.

Charity collection in Budgens

A collection taken in Budgens raised £260 for the charity North London Lupus.

Sippy Azizollah, herself a lupus sufferer, was ably assisted by the manager and staff at the High Road store. Some of them had donated cakes and biscuits for the table of free goodies. Sippy told THE ARCHER: "East Finchley residents are the kindest and most generous people I've ever met. The applause goes to Budgens and all who shop there. They are amazing."

New home for association

By Daphne Chamberlain
Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association are delighted with their new venue in Pages Lane.

They will have the privilege of sharing the centrally situated North Bank Community Centre with Muswell Hill's oldest tree - a 300-year-old horse chestnut, measuring 15 to 18 feet around its trunk.

On a human level, North Bank also houses the Whittington antenatal services, groups for parents and children, a Vintage Club for older people, and an information centre.

The next event in the Oak Room will be on Wednesday 18 February at 8pm, when local historians David Dell and Albert Finching will be talking about *Haringey's Hidden Streams*.

For more information about North Bank and its facilities, visit www.mhmc.org.uk, and to find out more about the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, call chairman John Hajdu on 020 8883 8114 or visit www.mhfga.1to1.org

Under new management

By Betti Blatman

Since the closure of the sub-post office in East End Road, the newsagent is now under new management.

An enthusiastic Uma Nathan wants to expand a range of products to suit local residents' requirements and would welcome suggestions.

He intends to stock newspapers and magazines, household items and a full range of stationery, as well as installing a cash machine. The shop will provide free local delivery for OAPs and disabled persons.

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Concern over Post Office rumour

By Daphne Chamberlain

A rumour that East Finchley Post Office was being considered for closure, with the Muswell Hill Office being kept open at our expense, caused concern last month. Fortunately, it seems to have been a misunderstanding.

Gary L Grange, Post Office Network Senior External Relations Manager, told THE ARCHER that both East Finchley and Muswell Hill "are part of the Post Office Network, and there are currently no plans for this position to change."

MP Rudi Vis's office has also been assured by the national network that there are no plans to close East Finchley. In fact, it is actually scheduled for some refurbishment, but that will be done while the office is open.

Councillor Alison Moore told us: "It's perfectly possible that that is where the idea that it's "on a list" comes from, but rest assured that Rudi and I, along with Andrew and Colin, will be keeping a very close eye on things and would fight any plans to close East Finchley High Road Post Office. It's right at the heart of our community, an anchor to our town centre and a vital facility

for local residents. You only have to stand on our street stall on a Saturday to see just how well used it is, and the picture is no different during the week."

Muswell Hill's MP, Lynne Featherstone, thought it highly unlikely that Crown Post offices would close, but added: "However, I think we must take nothing for granted, and the remaining sub-post offices need watching over."

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